

WERE THEY HYDROPHILIDS? (COLEOPTERA).

In 1909 (Ent. News 20(8): 364) Warren Knaus published a note about two hunters who shot into a passing swarm of large insects with guns, and brought down what proved to be *Hydrophilus triangularis* Say. The beetles were flying eastward just after 6 P.M. at the western outskirts of McPherson, Kansas.

This record immediately came to mind upon reading the entry for the night of June 12-13, 1849, in Captain Howard Stansbury's "Exploration and survey of the valley of the Great Salt Lake of Utah, including a reconnoissance of a new route through the Rocky Mountains." There are two editions of this work, 1852 and 1853; bibliographically they are separate items.

According to Stansbury, then, p. 25. [Tuesday, June 12, 1849] "After travelling twenty-six miles, we encamped on the level bank of Walnut Creek—a tributary of the Little Blue, with a tolerable supply of grass and water. . . ."

"Wednesday, June 13.—About two o'clock in the morning, the camp was suddenly aroused by the bursting upon it of a most furious storm. The wind blew a hurricane, the rain fell in torrents, while the thunder and lightning were terrible and incessant. Fortunately the camp had been pitched in a sheltered spot, or it must have been entirely blown away by the tempest: as it was, the tents were prostrated by the wind, and preserved with much difficulty. Our men were exposed to all its fury for several hours. At length, however, the sky partially cleared, but the lowering enemy seemed still to linger, as if meditating another attack. The morning proved exceedingly hot and close; the barometer continued to fall. Our poor mules having been picketed within the lines all night, and consequently exposed to the storm, seemed dejected, tired, and hollow; altogether the camp seemed weary and dispirited. The weather looked so very doubtful that we did not move until half-past two o'clock; the men being until then engaged in drying their bedding, which had been thoroughly soaked by the rain. An immense number of black beetles and other insects swarmed around the camp last evening. Attracted by the light, they annoyed us beyond measure, and could be heard all night, pattering against the tent like large drops of rain in a heavy shower."

According to the daily and accumulated mileages given in Appendix A, Outward Journey from Fort Leavenworth, their camp on the night of June 12-13 must have been in present day Jefferson County, Nebraska, close to Fairbury. In the Appendix, Walnut Creek is equated with Emigrants' [*sic!*] Creek. On June 13 they travelled only five miles and camped on the right bank of the Little Sandy, crossing the Big Sandy at noon the next day.

Hydrophilus triangularis flies in the dark and readily comes to light—witness Blatchley's comment (1910. Coleoptera of Indiana, p. 255), "Sometimes attracted by thousands to electric light in Indianapolis and the larger cities." It seems a reasonable inference that Captain Stansbury's notes refer to this species. Indeed, his locality cannot be very far from that of Thomas Say's examples used for the original description of *H. triangularis*. Say accompanied Major Long on his 1819-1820 expedition to the Rocky Mountains, going via the Platte River and returning by the Arkansas; of his type series he wrote, "It is rather rare in Pennsylvania but I obtained several specimens near the Rocky Mountains."—HUGH B. LEECH, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, California.*



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